IA Grand Prize Nomination Presentation Venue
AND THAT'S IT!
THAT WAS EVERY-ONE FROM RYUUGUU KOMACHI!
A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR THEIR AMAZING PERFORMANCE!
パチパチパチパチ
THANK YOU!
パチパチパチパチ
THE NEXT ENTRY
EVERYONE FROM SprouT!
ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF 765 PRO!
WELL THEN, BEFORE PERFORMING A SONG FOR US,
GIVE US A WORD OF YOUR THOUGHTS.

第23話「SMOKY DEAL」

祐佑（ゆうゆう） 原作／バンダイナムコゲームス

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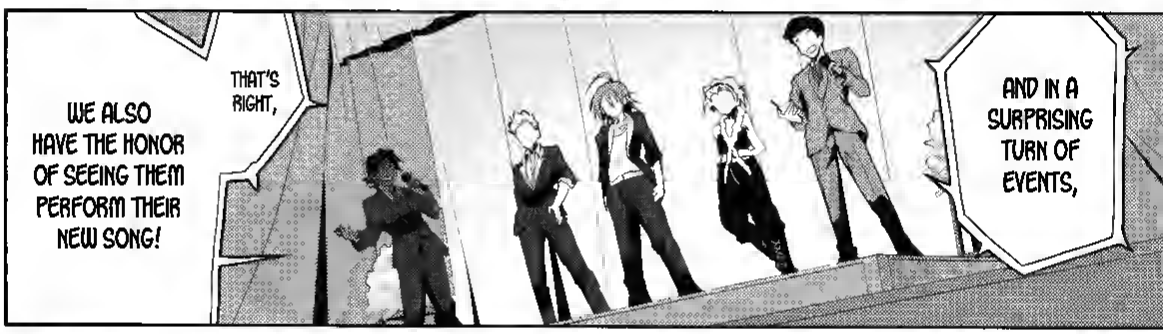
WE'RE BACK!
HA... I WAS SO NERVOUS...
AHAHA, YOU DIDN'T LOOK LIKE IT, YOU KNOW?
...BUT THIS IS A BIG DEAL FOR YOU GUYS TOO.
EVEN AT A TIME LIKE THIS, YOU'RE KEEPING YOUR MOOD UP AND HAVE PLENTY OF COURAGE.
BET YOU DIDN'T MAGINE SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN BACK BEFORE YOU HAD THIS JOB.
EHEHE...
MAYBE WE'RE JUST GETTING USED TO THIS KIND OF STUFF?
BUT WE'VE GOTTEN THIS FAR!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, IT'S FROM ALL YOUR HARD WORK, RIGHT?
THIS IS A REASONABLE OUTCOME!
...IT'S NOT A DREAM, HUH?
...BUT,
THAT MEANS THAT EVERYONE ELSE SHOULD ALSO BE HERE...
WELL THEN, THIS IS THE FINAL NOMINATION!

FROM 961 PRO, Jupiter!
...AND
THE PERSON WHO TAKES PRIDE IN DISCOVERING THIS OVERWHELMINGLY POWERFUL UNIT HIMSELF,
THE PRESIDENT OF 961 PRO, KUROI TAKAO!

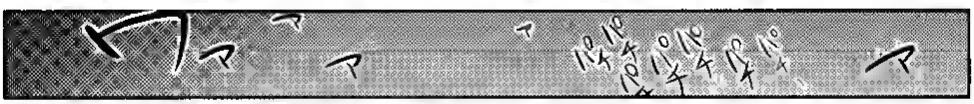

AND IN A SURPRISING TURN OF EVENTS,
THAT'S RIGHT,
WE ALSO HAVE THE HONOR OF SEEING THEM PERFORM THEIR NEW SONG!

EVERYONE ELSE WAS JUST ONE STEP AWAY!
IT'S THEIR FAULT, ISN'T IT?
...I WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR,
BUT IT'S DEFINITELY DIFFICULT TO DENY IT

WHAT'S WITH THE SPECIAL TREATMENT?
I'M UPSET!

WHILE I AM IRRITATED BY THIS,
THIS IS JUST DUE TO OUR OFFICE BEING TOO WEAK AS WELL.

...WELL, LET'S END THIS CONVERSATION HERE.
WELL THEN, LET'S LET JUPITER BEGIN SINGING!
DEBUTING TODAY,
"KOI WO HAJIMEY-OU"!



HAH...
I'M TIRED FROM WAITING 'TIL THE END.
I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT PRESIDENT KURO! SURE HAS A KNACK FOR GETTING PEOPLE TALKING.
I'LL BE SERIOUSLY IMPRESSED IF HIS METHODS WERE ALL HONEST HERE...
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

IT'S AS IF YOU'RE IMPLYING I'M DOING SOMETHING DIRTY.
PRESIDENT KUROI...
YOU'VE ALREADY DONE TOO MUCH..
YOU WANT TO PRETEND AS IF YOU AREN'T?
DO YOU HAVE ANY EVIDENCE?
...NO, I DON'T HAVE ANY.
BUT THERE'S ONE THING I WANT TO ASK YOU.
I DON'T NEED YOU TO ADMIT IT.
AREN'T YOU
ASHAMED OF YOURSELVES?
I CAN'T ANSWER...
NOW THAT IT SEEMS LIKE I FINALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON FROM TALKING WITH KIKUCHI-SAN...
WHAT A PAINFUL POSITION TO BE IN...
IF YOU'RE SO CONFIDENT,
SHOULDN'T YOU PLAY FAIRLY?

MY MY,
YOU'RE QUITE SNAPPY...
HAVE YOU CALMED DOWN YET?
I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO GO ALONG WITH YOUR FALSE ACCUSATIONS. SO EXCUSE US.
IORI-CHAN, CALM DOWN.
...OKAY?
OOH...
I-IORI-CHAN.
FINE, JUST GO.
YOU'RE JUST GOING TO AVOID MY QUESTION AND RUN AWAY LIKE THAT?
IF IT SUITS YOU, SHALL WE BE OPPONENTS THAT
PLAY FAIRLY
AS YOU REQUESTED,
RYUUGUU KOMACHI?
I'M RUNNING AWAY?
FROM YOU?
KUKU, WHAT A FUNNY JOKE.

WHY DON'T WE ARRANGE FOR AN APPROPRIATE STAGE?
OF COURSE,
I DON'T CARE IF YOU WANT TO RUN AWAY.
……
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NE, WE CEPT...
HEY HEY HEY IORIN, STOP!
YOU'RE ALWAYS TRYING TO TRAP US LIKE THIS!
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……
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY.
THERE'S NO TRAP.
……
NO TRICKS OR ANYTHING.
RIGHT... PRESIDENT?
...HMPH.
...IF WE'RE DOING THIS, IT'S GOING TO BE HONEST.

IORI'S COMPLETELY DETERMINED.
.....
WHAT ABOUT YOU, AMI?
I WONDER IF WE CAN HAVE A PROPER SHOWDOWN?
AZUSA-SAN?
I WANT TO HONOR IORI-CHAN'S FEELINGS.
RITSUKO.
...YEAH.
ON A NATION-WIDE NETWORK,
DURING PRIME-TIME,
ON A PROGRAM AND STUDIO NOT AFFILIATED WITH 961 PRO.
CAN YOU PREPARE A STAGE WITH THESE CONDITIONS?
.. THAT SHOULD BE FINE.
IT'S DECIDED!

HEY PRESIDENT,
I HATE TO BRING THIS UP AGAIN BUT...
YOU KNOW.
I DIDN'T USE ANY SHADY DEALINGS WHEN YOU COMPETED AGAINST KIKUCHI AND MIKI.
WHILE INCAPACITATING OTHERS IS MY STYLE,
I COULDN'T STAND THE WAY YOU GRABBED ME THE OTHER DAY.
GETTING ANGRY NOW WOULD MAKE THINGS WORSE.
SO I WITHDREW FROM MY INTERFERING AS YOU GUYS SAID.
AS A RESULT, ALLOWED 765 PRO TO BE NOMINATED.
I TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.
SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS YOU WON'T COMPLAIN AS LONG AS WE BEAT THOSE GUYS?
THAT'S IT.

THERE IS ONLY ROOM FOR ONE AT THE TOP.
THE UNIT THAT LOSES IN A DIRECT COMPETITION WILL BE LABELED AS LOWER RANKED.
IT'S FALLING FROM THE HIGHEST STAGE.

I DON'T PLAN ON INTERRUPTING THAT.
AS LONG AS WE DON'T HURT ANYONE AND FIGHT FAIRLY.

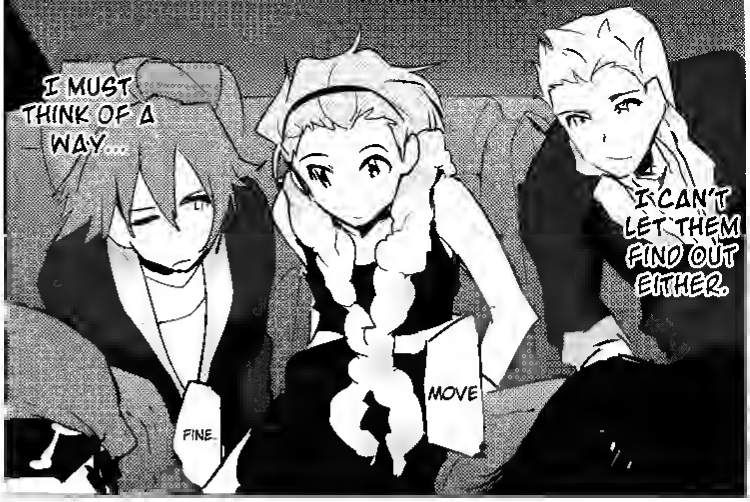
ANYWAY,
I MUST SETTLE THIS WITH THAT LOT PRATTLING ON
WITH MY OWN HANDS.

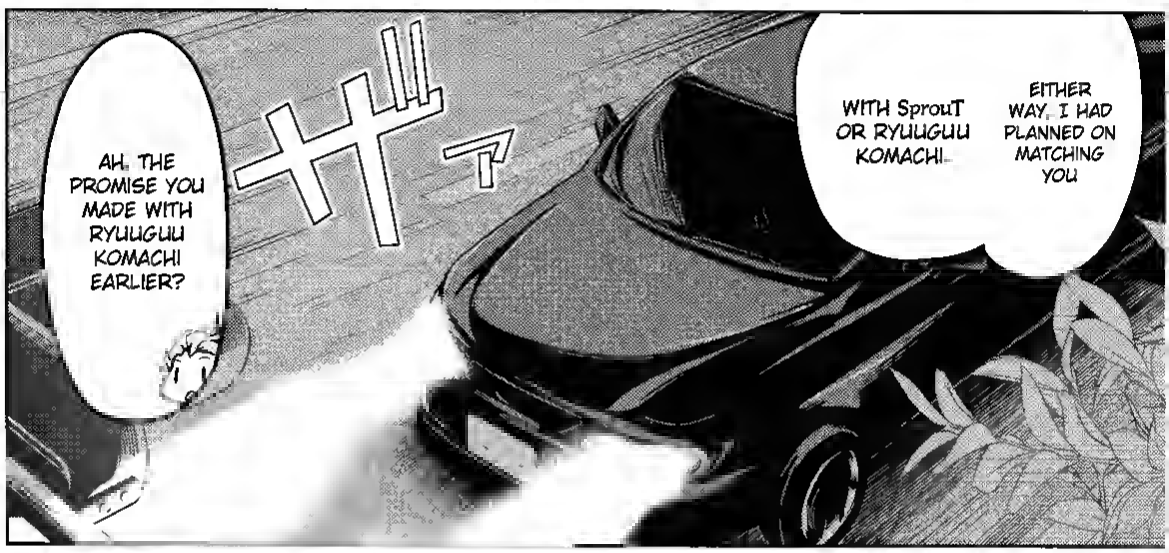
YEAH.
I AGREE WITH TOUMA-KUN

IT'S UNLIKELY, BUT
IT'S JUST IN CASE THEY ARE ALSO A RISK.
NOW, I CAN'T STAY WITH THEM FROM HERE ON.

I GUESS I HAVE NO CHOICE, THANKS TO YOUR IMMATURE PRIDE GETTING IN THE WAY.

WELL, I
WAS ABLE TO SAVE SOME EFFORT TODAY.
EFFORT?


I MUST THINK OF A WAY...
I CAN'T LET THEM FIND OUT EITHER.
MOVE
FINE.


AH. THE PROMISE YOU MADE WITH RYUUGUU KOMACHI EARLIER?
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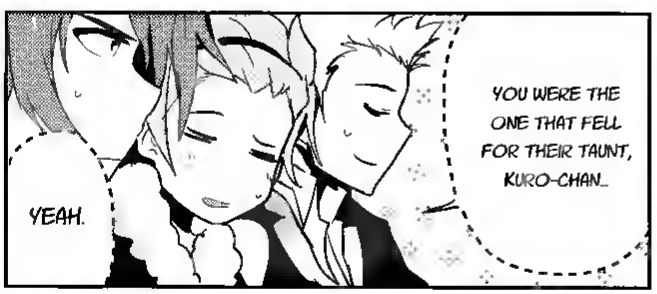
WITH SprouT OR RYUUGUU KOMACHI.
EITHER WAY, I HAD PLANNED ON MATCHING YOU


YEAH.
YOU WERE THE ONE THAT FELL FOR THEIR TAUNT, KURO-CHAN.

THEY FELL FOR OUR TAUNT.

NOPE, NOTHING.
ガァ
DID YOU JUST SAY SOMETHING?
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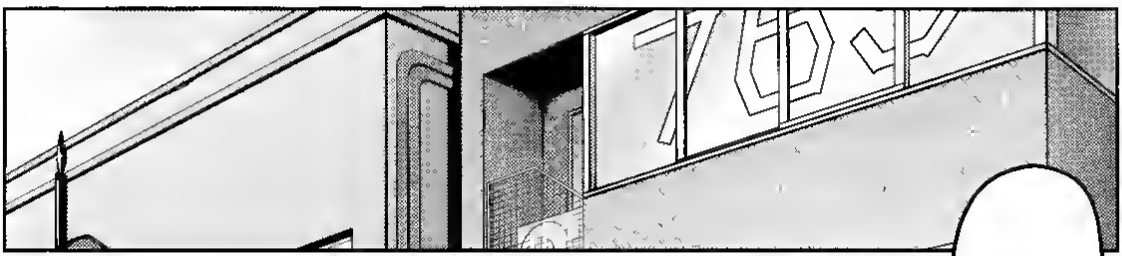
MORE!
LASTLY, LET'S DO ONE MORE SONG!
I CAN ESPECIALLY CONCENTRATE ON THE SONG'S RHYTHM WHEN I'M TIRED.
UH-HUH!
SWING YOUR HANDS, ANGLE YOUR BODY
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM EACH OTHER, BE CAREFUL TO KEEP IN SYNC
BE AWARE OF WHAT'S IN YOUR PERIPHERAL VISION.. RIGHT!
LASTLY!
EXPRESSION! YOU AREN'T TOO TENSE?
WELL DONE.
THAT WAS A PRETTY GOOD FEELING, WASN'T IT?

HIBIKI-CHAN, WAS THAT HARDER THAN USUAL?
UH-HUH, MENU 3 PREMIUM.
ALSO, THE CHECK WAS PRETTY SEVERE.
UHE...
HMM...
BUT, I THINK I FEEL BETTER FROM TODAY BEING THAT SEVERE...
WELL,
I GUESS I JUST REMEMBERED WHEN WE SAW JUPITER ONSTAGE EARLIER.
BESIDES, WE'VE LOST ONCE...
BUT I REALLY THINK IT'S A BIG DEAL.
THAT WAS A GREAT DEVELOPMENT AND A HUGE ACCOMPLISH-MENT EARLIER.
THANK YOU!
ALTHOUGH FROM THE LOOK HIBIKI-CHAN'S GIVING ME, I THINK I STILL HAVE A WAYS TO GO...
THAT'S NOT TRUE?
...I THOUGHT YOU DID GOOD.
REALLY?
YAY!
MAYBE SHE'S GOTTEN A LITTLE MORE CONFIDENT?

?
UH-HUH UH-HUH?
LET'S KEEP THIS MOOD UP!
THAT'S RIGHT..
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER SEEING JUPITER ON STAGE.
A- ANYWAYS,
RYUUGUU KOMACHI WERE AMAZING.
IORI-CHAN WAS ANGRY THAT THEY SABOTAGED EVERYONE...
NO, THEY WERE JUST COMPLETELY CAUGHT UP IN THEIR EMOTIONS.
THEY'RE PRETTY CONFIDENT, HUH? SO...
UH.. NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
WE ALSO HAD A SIMILAR EXCHANGE,
RIGHT?
AFTER THAT WE ENDED UP LOSING, HUH.
OKAY, STOP!

IN THE END IT WAS RITSUKO-SAN'S DECISION.
SHE WAS PREPARED FOR THOSE TERMS.
THE SITUATION THAT TIME WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
R-RIGHT!
U-UMM HIBIKI-CHAN,
IN THAT CASE...
HIBIKI-CHAN, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF JUPITER AND RYUUGUU KOMACHI'S...
...I DUNNO.
UMM... DIFFERENCE IN ABILITY...
...EH?
I CAN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT EITHER UNIT.
I SEE THEM BOTH IN THAT WAY.
SO, I DON'T KNOW WHO'LL WIN.
...SORRY.
しゅん
THE VENUE FOR THAT DAY IS CLOSE BY.
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT THEM, WANT TO GO CHEER THEM ON?
WHAT?! WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZ-ING?!
S-SORRY FOR ASKING YOU SOME-THING SO STRANGE!
.....

...UH-HUH
LET'S GO!
OF COURSE!



EVEN IF THERE ISN'T A DIFFERENCE WITH OUR UNITS,
THERE'S A HIGH CHANCE WE'LL LOSE FROM THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR PLANNED ACTIVITIES.
ANYWAY, OUR OFFICE'S FINANCIAL POWER IS TOO DIFFERENT.
THEN THERE'S JUPITER'S TALENTS AND PRESIDENT KUROI'S ABILITY.

WHY...DID I ACCEPT THE MATCH?
YES.

I DECIDED ON IT SO WE CAN GET THE IA GRAND PRIZE.

DOING AS MUCH AS YOU CAN SO YOU WILL WIN IN A DIRECT CONFRON-TATION?

THEY ARE PREPARING THE STAGE,
AND EVEN IF HE SAYS THERE AREN'T ANY TRAPS...
I THOUGHT YOU MADE A BRAVE DECISION
DID YOU THINK I WAS JUST FALLING FOR HIS TAUNTS?
NO WAY!
DON'T YOU THINK SOMETHING WOULD COME ALONG SOONER OR LATER?
IF HE WAS LYING,

IN THIS CASE, WE NEED TO FORCE SOME TERMS, EVEN IF THEY'RE SMALL.
ANYWAY, THEY AREN'T AN OPPONENT WE CAN AVOID.
CERTAINLY

WE'RE TAKING THE MATCH AHEAD OF YOU.
IF WE WIN HERE, WE'LL INSTANTLY BE A PRIME CANDIDATE FOR THE IA GRAND PRIZE.
友情
NATIONWIDE NETWORK AND PRIME-TIME?
AH, BY THAT YOU MEAN...

ACTUALLY, HOW SHOULD I PUT IT...
...BUT THINKING ABOUT IT THAT FAR...
MAKES YOU A TERRIBLE PERSON
YOU DIDN'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE ME, DID YOU?
I WILL CONFESS, HALF OF THAT WAS FOR LATER
I EMPATHIZED WITH IORI'S FEELINGS.
THAT'S THE SERIOUS EXPLANATION.
W-WELL ANYWAY!
WITH OUR TALENT, WE WON'T LOSE
AND AS LONG AS THE COMPETITION IS FAIR, WE HAVE HOPES OF WINNING...
DO YOU... BELIEVE WHAT AMAGASE-KUN SAID?
I THINK THAT'S HOW HE TRULY FEELS.
I GOT THE FEELING FROM SEEING HIS ATTITUDE AND GENUINE WORDS
I THINK WE CAN BELIEVE IN
THEIR PRIDE AS IDOLS.
...YOU'RE RIGHT.
AH, BUT, SINCE WE CAN'T TRUST PRESIDENT KUROI THAT MUCH,
PLEASE HELP WITH KEEPING A LOOKOUT ON THAT DAY.
EH?
AH, OKAY...

-The day of the competition program-
.....
I-I'M NOT NERVOUS...
REALLY?
THIS MIGHT BE THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE YOU'VE BEEN NERVOUS BEFORE A PERFORMANCE.
Y-YOU CAN'T SEEM TO CALM DOWN, HUH~
I-I WONDER?
IF I'M SHAKING,
THAT'S JUST BECAUSE
I'M TREMBLING WITH EXCITEMENT!
IT'S SHAKING! LOOK LOOK~
IT'S NOT GOOD TO BE STUBBORN, HUH IORI-N?
KNOCK
KNOCK
W-WHAT?
YOUR HAND.

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ドキ
ドキ
IT'S NOT TIME YET, RIGHT?
YEAH, SHOULDN'T BE_
KNOCK
KNOCK
WELL THEN, I'LL LEAVE YOU HERE SINCE I HAVE A MEETING WITH RITSUKO.
RYUUGUU KOMACHI'S WAITING ROOM IS OVER THERE_
OKAY.
765 プロダクション
竜宮小町 様
SHALL WE ENCOURAGE THEM?
THEY MADE ME FEEL REALLY HAPPY THEN.
コーン
THIS TIME IT'S OUR TURN TO SUPPORT THEM.
AHAHA,
BUT WE MIGHT JUST END UP ANNOYING THEM.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT,
RYUUGUU KOMACHI CAME TO SEE US WHEN WE FIRST PERFORMED ON TV.
ガチャ

HEY,
IORIN'S SHAKING LIKE WHEN SHE FIRST DEBUTED!
SHUT UP!
AREN'T YOU THE ONE THAT CAN'T CALM DOWN?!
WAH...
EVERYONE CAME.

EHEHE...
WE WERE JUST RETURNING THE FAVOR FOR PAYING US A SUPPORT VISIT.
YUP.
UH-HUH.

ARA ARA, EVERYONE'S HERE, HUH.
IT'S OUR FULL FORCE, HUH?
I'M AMAZED... EVEN YOU GUYS...

QUIET DOWN, YOU!
EH? WEREN'T YOU SUPER NERVOUS A LITTLE WHILE AGO?
EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT US THAT MUCH...
REALLY, ISN'T IT RIDICULOUS THAT EVERYONE AT 765 PRO ENDED UP GATHERING HERE?
TRY NOT TO PRESSURE THEM EVEN MORE...
MIKI... SHIJOU-SAN...
WHAT...! THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE...!
BUT I HEARD ABOUT THE MATCH YOU ACCEPTED, DEKO-CHAN.
AHAHA, IT CAN'T BE HELPED. AN OPPO-NENT'S AN OPPONENT.
THANKS EVERYONE!
UFUFU, I'M FEELING MUCH BETTER NOW.
RYUUGUU KOMACHI, WE'RE READY FOR STANDBY!
EH, UMM...
EH? WHAT WAS THAT?
IORIN, PLEASE SAY IT AGAIN!
AH IT HURTS
THAT EVERY-ONE CAME HERE TO SEE YOU?
STILL, YOU CARE RIGHT?
WE DON'T NEED A REASON OTHER THAN CHEERING OUR FRIENDS ON!

WELL, LET'S GO!
5月号に続く